

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are currently pending in the above-captioned application and all of which stand rejected. Claims 21-23 have been amended herein in order to more clearly define and fully protect Applicants' invention. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims 1-23 is therefore requested.

Although the present application is under final rejection, it is believed that the amendments made herein place all claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of these amendments is believed appropriate and is requested.

Claim Objection

Claim 22 is objected to as being grammatically incorrect. By amendment herein, this claim has been placed into a more grammatically correct form and, thus, the objection should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 23 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite in that it refers to a major surface comprising two major surfaces. By amendment herein, the structure of the claimed sheet is more clearly described, in that it has a second major surface which is not coated with the protective coating. Thus, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 should be withdrawn.

Claim 21 has also been amended in order to clarify the relationship of the major surfaces of the claims. No new matter is added by the amendments.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 10, 13 and 23 of the above-captioned application stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Shane et al. (U.S. 3,404,061). In addition, claims 1,21 and 22 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Liu (U.S. 6,262,893).

Claims of the above-captioned application also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ingraham et al. (U.S. 6,075,287), as well as Ingraham et al. in view of Unger et al. (U.S. 5,834,337).

In making these rejections, however, the Official Action overlooks a central facet of Applicants' invention. More specifically, Applicants' invention relates to a protective coating for a flexible graphite sheet in order to inhibit graphite flaking. The references cited relate to the use of an adhesive to adhere a thermal interface to an electronic component. Since the adhesive is provided to the portion of the interface material to be applied to the electronic component, it is provided at an area where flaking of graphite will not occur. Thus, whether it can be classified as a protective coating or not, such an adhesive is not placed to inhibit flaking of the particles of graphite. Rather, it is the surfaces other than those adhered to, or in contact with, the electronic component where flaking of graphite can occur and where the provision of a protective coating can inhibit or prevent such flaking.

In addition, since the references discuss adherence rather than protection from flaking, neither can the references suggest the invention of the rejected claims. Indeed, as noted, an adhesive is used for a specific purpose in an area of the interface material where, even should flexible graphite sheet be employed, flaking is not an issue. Thus, there can be no teaching or suggestion of the invention of the rejected claims in the disclosures of any of the cited references.

Therefore, nothing in any of the references anticipates or renders obvious the inventions of the rejected claims. This being the case, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and/or 35 U.S.C. §103 of all claims 1-23 should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed the above-captioned application is now in condition for allowance. If there is any matter which prevents the allowance of any of these claims, the Examiner is requested to call, collect, at 615-242-2400, to arrange for an interview which may further expedite prosecution.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with the filing of this Response to Deposit Account 50-1202.

Respectfully submitted,



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